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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM

: [REDACTED]
SA to the DCI for Compartmentation

SUBJECT : APEX - Timing of Your Decision on its Future

1. This memorandum is for your information and deals only with the timing of a decision by you on the future of APEX. The memorandum is forwarded because I hear that you have been urged to make a quick decision. I recommend, again, that you not act until you are comfortable with your understanding of the multiple issues involved.

2. The APEX concept is part of a broader set of concerns involving DCI responsibilities and authorities and is concerned with operation of a complex set of collection systems. The implementation of APEX, again, has been laid on the DCI by PD/NSC-55. That Presidential Directive resulted from years of negotiation, affirmed or established certain DCI authorities, and empowers you to modify the TKH system. To abandon it and all of its facets would be a major step backward and would leave you with responsibility to manage special access programs in accordance with Executive Order 12065, paragraph 4-2, but without a mechanism to do so.

3. On the other hand, the costs of implementing the APEX structure would, in my opinion, be greater than the benefits gained by the process. Widespread opposition to APEX, moreover, calls to question anyone's ability to convert successfully from the several extant systems to any new single system.

4. I again recommend that you take no action until:

- you are reasonably certain on the future forms of existing relevant Executive Orders, i.e., 12036 and 12065.
- you can consult with Admiral Inman when he is in place as DDCI and Mr. Carlucci when he is in place as Deputy Secretary of Defense.

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- you are comfortable with your understanding of the several elements of the existing special access programs.
- you are comfortable with the NFIB mechanism and acquainted with its members, and
- you are similarly comfortable with your understanding of the organization, functions and membership of President Reagan's National Security Council.

5. I do not wish to drag out the decisionmaking process on APEX, if only because the APEX Control Staff and I presently are underemployed-- there are more cogent and less personal reasons for a decision as soon as reasonable. A compromise seems necessary between a clean cut death for APEX, its implementing mechanisms and PD/NSC-55, on the one hand, and an effort to implement APEX as conceived in 1979, on the other. I am, again, working toward the definition of this middle ground but, as previously explained, defining that middle ground is a difficult and slow process.

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cc: DDCI

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SA/DCI/[redacted] tb (5 Feb 1981)

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1 - DDCI

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